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ABSTRACT

The Teachers of Tomorrow Academy (TOT) in Arkansas is a magnet school program that seeks to attract and prepare high school students for the teaching profession. A survey was administered to 113 students, grades 7-10, from 7 schools in the Pulaski County District to obtain feedback on students' career plans and on their reactions to the Academy concept, its location, and specific aspects of the program. The majority of students surveyed indicated that they were unsure about entering the teaching profession, and more students were definite about not wanting to enter the teaching profession than those who wanted to. The categories of reasons given for not wanting to enter teaching were: other career interests; negative perceptions about the job; a personal qualifier; and general lack of interest in the profession. Although only 12 percent of the students were definitely interested in teaching, 30 percent were definitely interested in attending the teaching academy. Twelve percent of the survey population were males of whom one-fourth indicated no interest in becoming teachers. With regard to questions of interest in enrolling in a magnet school program to be a teacher, the responses having the highest rank order were: having teachers who care about students and their future; earning college credit while still in high school; having opportunities to visit college campuses; having teachers who try new and different ways to teach; learning to use computers; and being paid to work with students. A copy of the TOT Student Survey accompanies the report. (IAH)

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TEACHERS OF TOMORROW ACADEMY REPORT

Survey/Needs Assessment

Pulaski County Teachers of Tomorrow Students

Presented to the

Teachers of Tomorrow Executive Board
and
Steering Committee

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BACKGROUND

The Teachers of Tomorrow Academy Planning Committee recognizes the importance of surveying future students and others in order to insure proper program planning and implementation. It is hoped that information contained in this report will assist in providing feedback on students' career plans, and how students react to the Academy concept, its location, and specific aspects of the program. This information can be used in developing recruitment materials, planning the curriculum, and providing for other aspects of the program.

This report contains information from one group, students from the Pulaski County School District's Teachers of Tomorrow Club, who visited the University of Central Arkansas campus throughout the spring 1992 semester. Mrs. Debi Avra, who was host for the groups, administered most of the surveys.

The pilot survey used in this report was later adapted for use by the Arkansas Institute of Government at University of Arkansas at Little Rock for the Teachers of Tomorrow student survey administered to students in the three districts.

POPULATION

The survey was administered to 113 students in grades 7-10. The majority, 87%, were female, 13% were male (valid percent); however, 10% did not respond to the item and were coded as missing cases. Race was not an item on this survey, although it is estimated that twenty percent of the students who visited the campus were minority.

The students were from seven schools within the Pulaski County District (Fuller, Oak Grove, Robinson, Northwood, Sylvan Hills, Southside, and Jacksonville Northside). Most students (60%) were in grade nine, with representation from grades eight (25%), seven (10%), and ten (5%).

DATA ANALYSIS

Survey data were entered on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Personal Computer (SPSS/PC) program. Variable frequencies and crosstabs were run on the data.

NOTES

This survey used the term "magnet school" rather than "school within a school" because of student familiarity with the term.

Although a part time program is not presently being considered, question #6 regarding a

ITEM ANALYSIS

Question items, with the exception of item #2, were coded as follows:

Yes, definitely	1
Maybe, but not sure	2
No, definitely not	3
Missing items	.

Question #1: Are you interested in becoming a teacher?

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1	13	11.5	11.6	11.6
2	82	72.6	73.2	84.8
3	17	15.0	15.2	100.0
.	1	.9	Missing	
Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Comment:

More students were definite about not wanting to enter the profession than those who did. The majority (73%) were unsure. Only one student did not respond to the item.

Question #2: If "No" (above) what are your reasons for not wanting to be a teacher?

Open ended responses:

It doesn't pay (2) Too much stress (2)
I just don't want to (2) It doesn't interest me
I want to be a lawyer (2) I want to be a doctor
Not good with kids

Basically, the reasons students gave for not wanting to enter the teaching profession fall into the categories:

having other career interests (3)
negative perceptions about the job (4)
a personal disqualifier (dislike of kids) (1)
a general disinterest in the profession (3)

Question #3 Do you feel your parents would like you to be a teacher?

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1	27	23.9	24.5	24.5
2	64	56.6	58.2	82.7
3	19	16.8	17.3	100.0
.	3	2.7	Missing	
Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Comment:

Nearly one-fourth of the students surveyed believe that their parents would like them to be a teacher. One student added the comment "It's my decision."

Question #4: Several colleges and school districts, including our own, are planning to develop a magnet school for students who want to become teachers. Would you be interested in attending such a school?

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1	34	30.1	30.6	30.6
2	63	55.8	56.8	87.4
3	14	12.4	12.6	100.0
.	2	1.8	Missing	
Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Comment:

Students had more definite, and more positive, opinions about attending a magnet school for teachers. These numbers contrast somewhat with question #1. Although 12% of the students are interested in teaching (item #1), 30% are definitely interested in attending the teaching academy. The academy concept is obviously appealing to those students who may be unsure about entering the profession.

Question #5: If "yes" above, would you consider enrolling in this school if it is not the high school you would normally attend?

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1	37	32.7	52.9	54.3
2	11	9.7	15.7	70.0
3	21	18.6	30.0	100.0
.	44	40.0	Missing	
Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Question #6. If "no", would you consider enrolling part-time in such a program (attending your present school half day)?

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1	27	23.9	41.5	41.5
2	28	24.8	43.1	84.6
3	10	8.8	15.4	100.0
.	48	42.5	Missing	
Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Question #7: This school is being planned on the Sylvan Hills Campus. If transportation is provided, would you consider attending there?

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1	70	61.9	68.6	68.6
2	21	18.6	20.6	89.2
3	11	9.7	10.8	100.0
.	11	9.7	Missing	
Total	113	100.0	100.0	

Comment:

Nearly 70% of those who responded to the question said they would be willing to attend the school on the Sylvan Hills campus if transportation is provided.

Survey Item #8 Please check those items that "would interest you in enrolling in a magnet school program to be a teacher." Item results were as follows:

Item	Freq.	Percent	Rank Order
Having teachers who care about me and my future	100	89	1
Learning to use/work with computers	92	81	5
Having the opportunity to work with children in a classroom	85	75	9
Having the opportunity to work as a teacher's aid	86	76	7.5
Having opportunities to visit college campuses	97	86	2
Earning college credit while still in high school	96	85	3
Receiving a scholarship to be a teacher	75	66	12.5
Being paid for working with students	89	79	6
Changing from my present school	25	22	16
Making new friends who have the same career goals	80	71	10
Learning how to work with people	86	76	7.5
Learning more about myself	78	69	11
Getting to know college students who want to be teachers	71	63	15
Getting to work with college professors	75	66	12.5
Having teachers who try new and different ways to teach	94	83	4
Receiving special help in academic areas	73	65	14

Comments: Having the survey administered while on a campus tour most likely influenced the response to item 5 (opportunity to visit college campuses).

Crosstabs: Question #1 "Are you interested in becoming a teacher?" by Gender

	Yes	Maybe	No	Row Total
Male	1	9	3	13
Female	8	68	11	87
Column Total	9 9.0	77 77.0	14 14.0	100 100.0%

Note: Number of missing observations = 13

SUMMARY

The following generalizations are drawn from the survey:

- Students perceive the Academy as a viable option in exploring teaching as a career. Although only 12% of the population identified themselves as definitely interested in becoming a teacher, nearly one-fourth were definitely interested in attending a teaching academy.
- The choice of Sylvan Hills High School is a popular one among the group of Pulaski County students surveyed. When asked if they would be interested in attending the magnet school if it were on the Sylvan Hills campus (Question #7), 69 % of those responding reported a definite interest in attending when told the school would be on the Sylvan Hills campus.
- The need to attract males into the teaching profession is accentuated in two ways: a) by the scant number of males which are in the survey population (12%) and b) by one-fourth of the male population responding as definitely not interested in pursuing teaching as a profession, as evidenced by running crosstabs on Item #1 and Gender.
- Of all information collected, the data collected in item #8 will prove to be valuable for the purpose of planning and recruitment. It is likely that this information can be generalized to the other school populations as well, with the exception of the second ranked "campus visits" item.

Rankings/Implications from Item #8:

- A. "Having teachers who care about me and my future" was ranked first, with 89% of the students checking this item.
Implication: Perhaps some consideration should be given to incorporating an "advisory" program into the curriculum (similar to formal "advisory" times which are now part of many middle level programs). This aspect could then be developed in promotional materials for the academy. (I.e., "The TOT Academy includes a special advisory program in which teachers take extra time to get to know students and help them plan for their future" vs. "The TOT Academy has teachers who care about students" which may imply that teachers in other schools do not care for students.)
- B. Students want to visit college campuses and earn college credit while still in high school (items were ranked second and third, respectively). However, getting to know college students and working with college professors did not hold much appeal, as these items ranked 15th and 12.5.
Implication: The use of AP courses and classes which articulate to the college level will be appealing to the students.

- C. The students want teachers to try new teaching methods (4th ranked item).
Implication: This item should be shared with those teachers who will be involved in the program. Academy teachers need to know the importance of and receive the necessary training in verbalizing why they are using a certain approach or method when instructing students.
- D. "Learning to use/work with computers" was ranked 5th. Computers--their use and integration throughout the curriculum--may prove valuable in attracting students to the academy.
Implication: Academy teachers should be willing to incorporate (or willing to learn how to incorporate) the computer to assist and manage instruction. Students should be given the opportunity to share computer expertise as well.
- E. "Being paid for working with students" (79%) was ranked 6th. Grouped closely to this item were "working with children in a classroom" (75%) "work as a teacher's aid" tied with "learning how to work with people (76%).
Implication: Having experiences in actual classroom settings is important to the students; however, of first concern is their own classroom experiences ("caring teachers", "computers", etc.).
- F. Ranked in the lower end are those items related to personal goals or self-improvement, "Receiving special help" (14th) "Learning more about myself" (11th), "Making new friends," (10th).
- G. The last rank ordered item was "changing from my present school." This question was asked because students who attend the Austin High School for the Teaching Professions (Houston) prioritized that as a reason to attend their magnet program. This difference in student motivation between the two populations emphasizes the importance of the TOT Academy's planning through surveys such as this in order to understand the student body and the communities it will serve, rather than merely replicating programs which may not be suitable for the Little Rock area.

TEACHERS OF TOMORROW ACADEMY
STUDENT SURVEY

Grade: _____ Circle one: male female
School District: _____
School: _____

1. Are you interested in becoming a teacher?
yes, definitely maybe, but not sure no, definitely not
2. If "no" (above) what are your reasons for NOT wanting to be a teacher?
3. Do you feel your parent(s) would like you to be a teacher?
yes maybe no
4. Several colleges and school districts, including our own, are planning to develop a magnet school for students who want to become teachers. Would you be interested in attending such a school? Yes maybe no
5. If "yes" above, would you consider enrolling in this school if it is NOT the high school you would normally attend?
Yes Maybe No
Comments:
6. If "no", would you consider enrolling part-time in such a program (attending your present school half day)?
yes maybe no
7. This school is being planned on the Sylvan Hills Campus. If transportation is provided, would you consider attending there?
yes maybe no Comments:
8. Which of the following would interest you in enrolling in a magnet school program to be a teacher? Please check all those that apply:

- _____ having teachers who really care about me and my future
- _____ learning to use/work with computers
- _____ having the opportunity to work with children in a classroom
- _____ having the opportunity to work as a teacher's aid
- _____ having opportunities to visit college campuses
- _____ earning college credit while still in high school
- _____ receiving a scholarship to be a teacher
- _____ being paid for working with students
- _____ changing from my present school
- _____ making new friends who have the same career goals
- _____ learning how to work with people
- _____ learning more about myself
- _____ getting to know college students who want to be teachers
- _____ getting to work with college professors
- _____ having teachers who try new and different ways to teach
- _____ receiving special help in academic areas

Please list other reasons and any comments on the back--thanks!